



The US Army Military History Institute of the new Army Heritage and Education Center (AHEC) has completed its move to a new research facility and is now open for business. The AHEC complex will eventually combine the Military History Institute (MHI), the future Army Heritage Museum with its conservation and restoration facility, and a planned visitors and education center. MHI's new building, the first of five structures planned for the site, opened for public use on August 2, 2004. It is located at 950 Soldiers Drive (off Army Heritage Drive) on a 55-acre tract of county-donated land adjacent to the Carlisle Barracks golf course. Researchers may visit MHI from 9:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Monday through Friday. On 24 September, AHEC will conduct a special grand opening ceremony that will feature military re-enactors, a parachute team, and many dignitaries.

The new building is a 67,000 square foot, state-of-the-art archival facility. It features the latest technology to store, maintain and retrieve Army historical documents and artifacts for scholars, students and the general public. MHI houses about fourteen million items documenting the Army's history, as well as selected aspects of general military history. There is seating for



some 80 researchers, and patrons may now access any of the holdings from one location. A new integrated library database system also available through the Institute's website allows researchers to access all collections, and there are 22 computers available for patron use. The unique feature of the collection database is that all items – diaries, artifacts, manuscripts, photographs, and audio or digital media – are now linked electronically. The building was designed to use the latest technology in environmental controls and monitors to protect the holdings, state of the industry space-saving shelving, and the latest in security equipment.

The Military History Institute is the Army's premier repository of original documents, letters, publications, maps and photographs, and is a nationally recognized academic research facility. Its current holdings include over 300,000 books, 250,000 authority



publications (regulations, doctrinal and technical manuals), over 60,000 bound volumes of military related periodicals, 1.2 million photographs, and more than 11,000,000 personal papers and documents. MHI is the Army's central repository for materials related to Army history. The Institute's mission is to collect, organize, preserve, and ensure access to source materials on American military history for the defense community, researchers and scholars, and the general public.

Particularly noteworthy are MHI's collections of personal papers, which document the service throughout our nation's existence of many distinguished soldiers, ranging from privates to generals. These sources provide an intimate and unique glimpse into the history of the Army. For many general officers of the recent period, the Institute has in its holdings not only their papers, but also their recollections and reflections recorded as a component of the oral history program which the Institute administers and selected Army War College students support. MHI supports several USAWC programs to include the Military History Program, the Communicative Arts Program, the Senior Officer Oral History Program, and Division Command Lessons Learned Program. For student research, the archives contain a superb collection of the personal papers and oral history transcripts of senior officers, junior officers, noncommissioned officers, and soldiers. The MHI staff provides expert research assistance and historical consultation, and has prepared more than 11,000 bibliographies listing its holdings on numerous military and military related subjects. Thousands of



documents have also been digitized and can be accessed through the AHEC and MHI websites. These include finding aids, manuscripts, and photographs of museum artifacts. The AHEC website can be accessed at <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ahec/index.htm> and MHI is accessible at <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usamhi/index.htm>. The AHEC and MHI are interested in

collecting and preserving the experiences of anyone who served in the Army, and donation guidelines are explained on the websites."

Throughout the USAWC academic year (September through May), the Military History Institute hosts a monthly evening public lecture series, "Perspectives in Military History", on the historical dimensions of the exercise of generalship and strategic leadership. MHI also sponsors the Harold Keith Johnson Visiting Professor of Military History, a visiting scholar who serves as a senior faculty specialist and adviser in military history. The Visiting Professor for AY 05 is Dr. Mark A. Stoler of the University of Vermont, a renowned diplomatic historian and biographer of George Marshall.

The recently opened archives building is only the first of a planned five building complex. The second building, an interim storage facility for the Army Heritage Museum, is also complete but does not allow public access. The third building, a 50,000 square foot Visitors and Education Center, will be the hub of the new complex and will provide a general orientation area for the AHEC. It will display promotional exhibits for other area museums and attractions, as well as include a lecture hall and conference facilities, classrooms and reading rooms, auditorium, and research and administrative areas. The Center's education programs will include both in-house and outreach programs of national scope. Distance learning and research capabilities will be at the core of the education programs offered, including online access to some MHI records, photos and finding guides to military genealogy. Ground-breaking will take place for this building in September, 2004 with construction expected to start in the summer of 2005. The fourth building will be a non-public museum support facility designed for the conservation of historical materials. It will house conservation and restoration laboratories for photography, paper and books. The AHEC will have the responsibility to maintain and restore such materials for the entire Army museum system and for all historical holdings. The last building in the complex will be the long-awaited Army Heritage Museum. The museum became an official part of the Army Museum System in September 2000 upon approval by the Army's Center for Military History, following a request by the Commandant of the U.S. Army War College to establish the museum at Carlisle Barracks. It will be a component of the National Museum of the US Army. Museum staff has been hired and they are developing the story lines and exhibit master plan.



The complex will also include an Army Heritage Trail, currently under construction. The three-quarter mile trail will connect with the existing running path

around the post golf course and will use displays and vignettes to explore several periods of Army history. The trail is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2004.

Another unique aspect of AHEC development is its combination of federal, state, and private funding. The Visitors and Education Center will be built with a combination of state and private money, while museum costs will be covered solely from the latter source. The Army Heritage and Education Center Foundation is responsible for the private fund drive. Their staff has also developed many useful educational products utilizing AHEC artifacts and manuscripts. Their website, at <http://armyheritage.org/>, features an "Artifact of the Week" as well as a Virtual Museum describing the experiences of individual soldiers through their writings and artifacts. This also illustrates the AHEC motto that "We tell the Army's story, one soldier at a time."

The Army Heritage and Education Center is an exciting new program and organization that will provide tremendous service to the students at the Army War College and the American public as a whole.

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